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TRANSCRIPT

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF STATION WUSA-TV

PROGRAM Inside Washington CITY Washington, D.C.

DATE November 5, 1995 7:00 PM AUDIENCE

SUBJECT CIA Passed on Phony Information Planted by the Soviets

BROADCAST EXCERPT

GORDON PETERSON: I picked up the Washington Post on Thursday and I read that the Pentagon may have spent billions defending against false threats posed by phony information planted by the Soviets. And the CIA, we learn, passed this bum scoop along to Congress. But don't blame the top guys. They didn't know.

Evan, you are my CIA expert. Evan has just published "The Very Men: Four Who Dared" on the early years of the CIA, Simon and Shuster. Buy several of these for Christmas gifts. Best book ever written on the CIA.

Anyway, what on earth...

EVAN THOMAS [Newsweek]: Thanks for the plug, Gordo. Appreciate it.

PETERSON: What on earth has been going on at Langley these past few years?

THOMAS: Well, it's pretty unbelievable that they would pass along poisoned information. They would know this information came from doubles, from Russian doubles, and they would still send it to the White House. How can that happen? How can that happen?

Well, if you spend too long in that spooky world, you can lose your bearings. They're called a wilderness of mirrors, and it breathes a kind of paranoia and an arrogance. And those analysts over there decided that even though it was -- it was tainted intelligence, they figured it was right anyway, and they were arrogant enough to pass it along. They're regretting it now, but that's the mind-set that you can get.

PETERSON: James Jesus Angleton was a man ahead of his time.

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THOMAS: He was. But he's the -- oddly, he's the cause of this. He was so tough chasing moles that when he finally went crazy and they ran him out of there, they forgot about counterintelligence, and that produced Aldrich Ames.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER [Syndicated Columnist]: Let me just say in partial defense of these guys that you can pass on tainted information if you label it, if you say it's from a suspect source so look at it askance. And it was the lack of labeling or the inappropriate labeling which I think is the real issue here.

CARL ROWAN [Chicago Sun-Times]: Well, let me...

NINA TOTENBERG [National Public Radio]: That's not minor. That's pretty major.

CARL ROWAN [Chicago Sun-Times]: Well, let me tell you, though...

KRAUTHAMMER: But some of it was labeled and some wasn't. It wasn't all...

THOMAS: But why not?

KRAUTHAMMER: It wasn't all just handed over as...

ROWAN: Well, let me tell you. Not all presidents were fooled. They just didn't know what to do. Remember Gulf of Tonkin, and they talked about the Viet Cong hitting our destroyers, an excuse to bomb North Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson said to me, "Carl, I trust these intelligence guys about as much as I'd trust a Fort Worth whore."

[Laughter]

ROWAN: But he still didn't know what to do about it.

KRAUTHAMMER: And you can say that because you are quoting him. Right?

TOTENBERG: You know, Evan, you said that the guys and the director of operations are out to get Deutch, John Deutch, the head of the CIA. Well, listen, he's their last hope. If he can't save the CIA, it's not going to be -- exist the way it is today.

THOMAS: Yeah. And there is a self-destructive side to this.

PETERSON: We have to take a break. "The Very Best Men" by Evan Thomas.

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I hope this is it, Joan.

R

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